

# A SPARKLING REPORT.

## THE CHAMPAGNE REGION OF AMERICA

The Vineyards of Western New York.

TWENTY THOUSAND ACRES OF GRAPES.

Millions of Gallons of Wines.

## AMERICA AS A RIVAL OF FRANCE

Grape Growing and Wine Making in Steuben, Yates, Schuyler, Chautauque, Chautauque and Ontario Counties.

## RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE BUSINESS

There are probably thousands of residents in the city of New York who are not aware that within a day's ride of their homes there is a region of country devoted to grape culture and wine making that has scarcely a rival for those purposes in the world. We refer particularly to the counties of Steuben, Schuyler, Yates and Ontario and to the borders of Lakes Keuka, Seneca, Cayuga and Chautauque. Of course grape culture is largely carried on in other parts of the State and nearer the metropolis, especially by Steuben, Underhill, at Croton Point, N. Y., but our object at present is to show the extent of the business as carried on within the extensive but compact region named. For this purpose we shall enter also a familiar description thereof, asking our readers to accompany a Herald representative as he proceeded to make his investigations.

HOW TO GET THERE. Selecting Pleasant Valley as the objective point, with Hammondport, situated on Keuka (the pretty Indian name for the homey Saxon one of Crooked Lake), the reader will take the Erie Railroad cars at nine o'clock A. M., for Bath, N. Y., via Corning. Arriving at Bath about six in the evening, he can take either the regular stage conveyance or a private team for Hammondport, eight miles distant, through a most lovely valley, or hurry overnight in Bath, where there is a good hotel, and where the wine is not very well supplied with hotels, but citizens and the adjacent grape country are very hospitable, and look after the comfort of visitors with fully as much cordiality as could ever be expected in the famous wine districts of once la belle France.

And now, if the reader will take a short ride with the Herald representative, he will find himself in the elegant reception room of the extensive wine cellar of the

PLEASANT VALLEY WINE COMPANY, Hon. D. C. Howell, President, and in company with Directors G. D. Champlin, Secretary and Treasurer, and Youngblood and D. Rose, Superintendent John Masson, recognized as among the first in a knowledge of the art of champagne wine making in America, and while enjoying the genial and intelligent companionship of Dr. Van Keuren and several other gentlemen, some natives of the city of New York, let us gather a few particulars about the

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF VINE AND WINE CULTURE IN AMERICA. This culture in Western New York is of modern origin, at the same time it has been rapid in development and eminently successful in results. Many of our readers may be familiar with the fact that during our colonial and early subsequent history American vine and wine culture was undertaken by various points within our then limited Union of States, and in every instance failed. The cause of this failure was found to be owing to the fact that every variety of grape planted was such as were grown in Continental Europe and utterly refused acclimation, adaptation or healthy producing growth in this country.

In the march of time and in the course of events the vine vinifera, or European species, was abandoned and the discovery made that we had growing wild in our forests grapes as excellent as the Catawba and Isabella, that could be successfully grown, and from which wine could be made of such excellence as to justify the hope that time and events would lead to realization the possibility we now find culminating.

THE FAILURE AT CINCINNATI. With these varieties grape culture and wine making were undertaken and carried on for a few years with promise of continued success, at Cincinnati, Ohio; but after a few years disease made its appearance there, as in Southern Europe, and the vineyards abandoned without a struggle for mastery of the malarial, their vines and the wine merchant being unable to supply himself with material for manufacture, and trade saw disaster skirting the once rosy-tinted horizon of their hopeful enterprise, and grape-grower and wine-maker alike looked for success in their pursuits. This failure at Cincinnati occurred some fifteen years since, when, as it is in obedience to one thing should not be the lot of any wisely directed effort, in these United States, it was found that besides the early culture of the Mission grape by the Jesuits in Southern California, from whence

OUR SHERRY WINES ARE TO COME, we say beyond this and the failures we have hinted at, there yet remained localities peculiarly adapted to the growth of the vine in health and its fruit in the highest excellence. American enterprise, that knows no rest for attainable object or purpose, wrought wonders in vine culture by producing by

HYBRIDIZATION, OR CROSSING, and discoveries of other new varieties of grapes a wonderful change for the better in this culture. As under the direction of desirable new plantings of vines of the older and these new kinds were made abundantly, so to speak, along what has since been found to be the

MOST HEALTHY HOME OF THE VINE, the more northern border of Ohio and Western New York. To-day, while the borders of Lake Erie produce their lock wines, and the grapes from which sparkling champagne is made to some extent, the great champagne district, THE ERIE VALLEY OF AMERICA, is in Western New York, and the great head centre there is Pleasant Valley, Steuben county, at the head of Crooked, or, as we have already said, Keuka Lake. Here vine and wine growing has attained to a degree of perfection and height of success, little, if any, short of full and complete. Year after year, for more than a decade, the best and most delicate flavored wine grapes of American origin have been planted here, and grown and ripened in perfection; and year after year, for the same period of time, has the planting of them increased and extended, until now there are in this valley and about this lake alone, it is estimated, somewhere between

FIVE AND SEVEN THOUSAND ACRES IN VINES. It may be interesting to some to know that the location of this place is but little more than three hundred and twenty-five miles from New York by the New York and Erie Railroad, and about the same distance, nearly due north from the city of Washington, D. C., or 30 degrees west of its meridian and latitude north 42 degrees, 30 minutes. The altitude of Keuka Lake and Pleasant Valley is some 75 feet above the water.

KEUKA LAKE is one of a chain of lakes, heading southward, running through the central portion of Western New York, about most of which grapes are grown successfully to a greater or less extent, as is the case with some of the tablelands near Brockport, Niagara county and Fredonia and Brockport, Chautauque county. These conversant with

EUROPEAN WINE CULTURE need not be reminded of the fact that Rheims, Epernay, Ay, Cote-d'Or, as well as Johannisberg, are on the northern border of European wine culture, and that it is along such northern border that grapes are grown which give the highest flavor and richest bouquet. It is in the border of the United States and Keuka Lake the altitude, configurations and surroundings like to the European vine country, and continued a reputation from dews and fogs most favorable for vine growing. This culture, and a beginning here with the Catawba and Isabella in garden planting some forty years ago, but not until 1854 or 1855 were they or other varieties grown in vineyard quantities. By 1860 this culture had been so far successful, and had so greatly extended, as to suggest a few of the more peculiarly adapted and thoughtful the feasibility of organizing a wine company. The result was that of the forming of the Pleasant Valley Wine Company.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TONS of Catawba, Isabella, Delaware, Diana, Concord and Hartford grapes, neatly packed in three, five and ten pound boxes, found their way to New York city and other places on the seaboard and inland; yet notwithstanding this immense traffic it was found necessary to at an average of one-fourth of a mile, the border of the lake and valley. RAPID GROWTH OF THE WINE BUSINESS. The following is a record of the business in wine manufacture of the Pleasant Valley Company, which will furnish an idea of the extent of the business of this company since its organization:

Year	1869	1870	1871
Produce	30,000	30,000	30,000
Wine	100,000	100,000	100,000

By 1865, the company commenced the manufacture of true sparkling Champagne wine. For this purpose they secured the services of J. D. Masson, of Rheims, France, who, in addition to his experience in his native country, in the vineyard and in the sparkling wine making. In 1869, Jules Masson (his brother) was making to the talent of the company for Champagne wine. The result was that the former superintendent of the celebrated Longwood wine establishment in Cincinnati.

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know something of the details of wine growing in this region. The selection of a site or plot of ground it is of the first importance that the atmosphere be dry above it, and that the soil itself be dry or made so by ditching and underdraining; that it be near a body of water, and that the wind be from the west and unseasonable frosts; and, as experience has shown, for the highest excellence of fruit that the soil be of a sandy nature, with a slope or inclination to the south in the main.

Greatest success has attended the planting upon drift, or the gravelly clay, or on argillaceous shale, with the vine from five to eight feet apart, after the soil has been plowed and subsoiled to a depth of ten or twenty inches. Preference has been given to two or three cuttings, planted in the month of May, at corn planting time, and such success has attended this culture, that when of sufficient size, from one to three shoots, varying with amount of growth, supported on a trellis, and trained to a vine, the vine, using No. 11 wire, supported on stakes from fifteen to twenty-four feet apart, and three wires to the ground, and each other, upward the wires being held in place by stakes made for the purpose and end stakes supported by braces.

THE ANNUAL PRUNING necessary to limit and distribute the growth, seconded by training to the lower wire, and in extreme cases to the second wire, is a laborious task in all bearing will kill the trellis and yield from two to three tons to the acre.

The various pruning recommendations, and practiced by Dr. Guyot, of France, and Professor Friedrich Mohr, of Germany, have preference in the Pleasant Valley grape region and on inland waters.

here and in Western New York generally are mostly Catawba, Delaware, Isabella and Concord. About 1850, the vine was introduced from France, and by far than at any other point we have knowledge of in the United States. The Walter and Eumalia vine is the most successful, and is the only one of the rank of grapes for wine and table use, as ESTIMATED IN PLEASANT VALLEY.

1. Yona.—Dr. Grant's Yona Island, near Peekskill, N. Y.

2. Delaware.—Origin unknown, supposed New Jersey; brought out by a Mr. Thompson from Delaware.

3. Catawba.—As is well known originated in North Carolina; brought out by Major Adlam, of Washington.

4. Diana.—Named after Mrs. Diana Cheshire; originated near Boston.

5. Concord.—Originated in Concord, Mass.

6. Isabella.—Well known brought out by Major Gibbs, of South Carolina, and named after Mrs. Gibbs. Succeeds better North than South.

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